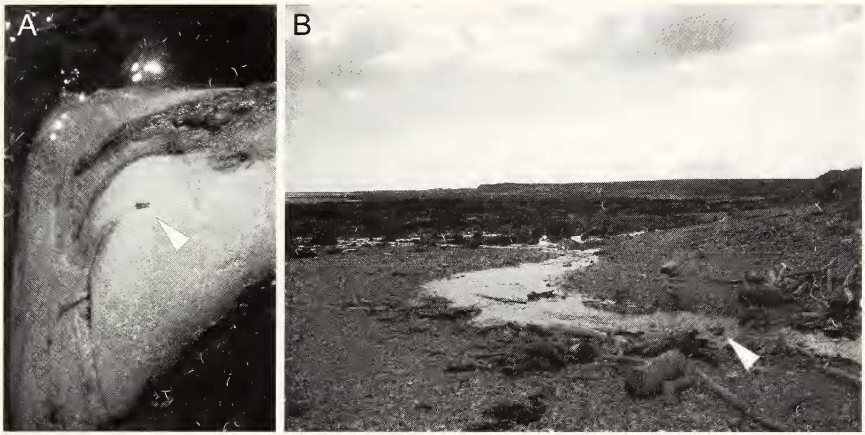

Figure 1. (A) *Simulium cryophilum* pupa on exposed stone indicated by white arrow. (B) Cambo Burn shore collection site of *S. cryophilum* indicated by white arrow.

saline habitats with the exception of *S. aureum* group species which are seen distributed in sea coast areas and have been found where the stream debouche onto the beach just above the high tide mark; a phenomenon now illustrated by *S. cryophilum*.— JOHN C. DAY, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology-Oxford, Mansfield Road, Oxford, OX1 3SR (E-mail: jcda@ceh.ac.uk).

Is *Spatalistis bifasciana* (Hb.) (Lep.: Tortricidae) associated with Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*?

On 29 September 2005, MP and Tony Davis visited Beckley Woods in East Sussex in an attempt to locate larvae of the Olive Crescent *Trisateles emortualis*. Old withered and brown leaves of oak *Quercus* spp. and Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa* hanging from trees were particularly targeted for these searches. In one partly shady patch, several clumps of fairly tightly aggregated withered brown leaves of Sweet Chestnut were found on small branches that had fallen earlier in the year, these branches being caught in the branches of other trees just a few feet off the ground. The leaves were unravelled to find several larvae, with signs of feeding, i.e., frass. The larvae were clearly not Olive Crescent, but were retained in the hope of rearing them through. These were overwintered in a garden shed within a clear plastic container, its contents lightly sprayed with a mist of water from time to time.

It came as somewhat of a surprise that on the 30 April 2006 a *Spatalistis bifasciana* emerged, followed by two further examples, one on each of 1 and 2 May. Examination of the leaves found a pupa extruded from a cocoon within a tightly bound Sweet Chestnut leaf fragment. Reference to Emmet (1988. *A field guide to the smaller British Lepidoptera*. British Entomological and Natural History Society, London) gives the berries of Buckthorn *Rhamnus*, Alder Buckthorn *Frangula* or Dogwood *Swida* (=*Cornus*) as foodplants, Razowski (2001. *Die Tortriciden Mitteleuropas*. F. Slamka, Bratislava) adding Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, Bog Bilberry *V. uliginosum*, Privet *Ligustrum vulgare* and Cornelian-cherry *Cornus mas.*

It may be pertinent to add here that whilst undertaking a study of the moth fauna of various age classes of Sweet Chestnut coppice in Rewell Wood, West Sussex, in 2003, 21 *S. bifasciana* were recorded on 25 June 2003, with a maximum of nine in one MV trap (Clarke, 2004. *The Waved Carpet moth* Hydrelia sylvata *([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) coppice woodland survey 2003*. Butterfly Conservation, Wareham). This trap was placed in the oldest coppice block sampled (*c.* 20 years of age) and, perhaps, would be expected to be in an area with the greatest concentration of dead leaves hanging from trees.

In answer to the question posed in the title, it would seem that this is an unlikely yes! This species is not listed in Parsons & Greatorex-Davies (2006. The value of Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa* as a foodplant for Lepidoptera. *Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation*, **118**: 1-11) and would appear to be yet another Nationally Scarce species (currently graded Notable) associated with this under-valued tree.— Mark Parsons, Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP.

Unusual flight time of the Sword-grass *Xylena exoleta* (L.) (Lep.: Noctuidae) in Perthshire

During the period of 27-31 December 2005, the Rothamsted Insect Survey light trap at Kinnaird (trap number 576, O. S. grid reference NO 241291) caught a single specimen of *Xylena exoleta*. This univoltine species generally flies during September and October (the last record from this trap was 27 September 2002) before hibernating through the winter and taking to the wing again in March and May. It is therefore very unusual, especially in the more northerly reaches of its distribution, to find a specimen flying in late December.

The Sword-grass has declined greatly in recent years and its range has contracted so that its strongholds are now in northern England and Wales, and throughout Scotland. Occasional records in the south of the country are probably immigrants. My thanks to Trefor Woodford for his continued hard work in running the trap so efficiently.— Philip J. L. Gould, Co-ordinator of the Rothamsted Insect Survey Light-trap Network, Plant & Invertebrate Ecology Division, Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 2JQ (E-mail: phil.gould@bbsrc.ac.uk).